

# **SPR**

---

## **SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES**

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER DES MOINES, IOWA**

**One-Stop Profile**

**June 1996**

**Based on a Site Visit Conducted During May 1996**

# **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER DES MOINES, IOWA One-Stop Profile**

---

## **CONTENTS**

<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Evolution and General Description of Local Design .....	8
Universal Access .....	9
Customer Choice .....	10
Integrated Services .....	11
Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based .....	12
Physical Facilities .....	13
<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Staffing Arrangements .....	14
Capacity Building.....	15
Management Information Systems (MIS) .....	16
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements .....	16
Marketing.....	17
<b>DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Services for Individual Customers .....	18
Services for Employer Customers .....	19
<b>CUSTOMER RESPONSE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Individuals .....	20
Employers .....	21
<b>INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED .....</b>	<b>22</b>

---

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER DES MOINES, IOWA

## One-Stop Profile

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

As part of its One-Stop initiative, the state of Iowa has set a goal of developing a One-Stop center within each of the state's 16 SDAs. The Workforce Development Center in Des Moines (Des Moines WDC) was designated as the official One-Stop center within SDA 11, an 8-county service delivery area. The Center received funding from both the first and second year federal One-Stop implementation grant to further One-Stop development.

The planning and development of a One-Stop center in Des Moines builds on the pre-existing co-location of many workforce development partners and programs in a single facility in downtown Des Moines. Among the early goals of the One-Stop center were *increasing the flow of information among partner*sto increase each agency's familiarity with what other agencies do and *facilitating inter-agency coordination on behalf of common clients*. However, the current One-Stop initiative has evolved far beyond physical co-location and coordination of services to individual clients to include *coordination of planning and budget initiatives* among workforce development partners throughout the region (whether or not the partners have a physical presence within the One-Stop center) as well as *consolidation and integration of selected functions* among the co-located partners.

Several key variables are influencing the context within which the local One-Stop vision is emerging and taking shape. These include: (1) an extremely low unemployment rate; (2) support for a strong work ethic within the state's welfare-to-work initiative; (3) a decline in funding for the individual agencies participating in the One-Stop initiative; and (4) uncertainty about the organizational structures that will ultimately emerge for workforce development programs at the state and local levels. Each of these is briefly described below.

- *Polk County, which contains Des Moines, has an extremely low unemployment rate, under 3%.* This influences both the types of customers seeking assistance from the public workforce development system and the needs of local employers. In this tight labor market, the

clientele that has traditionally sought public employment services are low-wage, low-skill manual laborers. Job seekers with more attractive skills are likely to have little difficulty finding new jobs. On the other hand, employers have difficulty finding qualified workers and complain of high rates of employee turnover.

One of the questions raised by the One-Stop initiative is whether the public system can design services that will attract a broader range of job seekers and employers. More recently, as a result of corporate downsizing, the public workforce development system is beginning to serve professional workers who are seeking assistance in finding new jobs. These customers are requesting a broader range of services, including help with career planning and development, rather than “just a job.” These more highly skilled workers are very attractive to local employers.

- *There is strong public and agency support for the state’s welfare-to-work initiative—PROMISE JOBS— which calls for participants to move rapidly toward full-time employment.* To encourage the transition from welfare to work, the program offers transitional benefits and supportive services to assist families to leave public assistance. Because of the strong work philosophy guiding this program, extended post-secondary training prior to employment is no longer encouraged for the welfare population, although basic education to complete high school equivalency is strongly urged.
- *A number of the partner programs and agencies, including ES, UI, and VETS have experienced substantial funding cuts in recent years.* Staff responsible for the ES, UI, and VETS functions feel overwhelmed by the high volume of customers they are expected to serve with ever-reduced levels of staff. As a result, staff are very interested in consolidating staffing for common functions shared with other workforce development partners (e.g., job development and employer services) and reducing duplication of effort.
- *There is currently considerable uncertainty over the organizational arrangements for the planning and delivery of One-Stop services at both the state and local levels.* Staff concerns about job security, wages, benefits, and overall control issues among the local partners make it difficult for the different entities participating in the Des Moines WDC to focus on an integrated team effort. If local partners are required to compete for local workforce development dollars (as suggested by the director of the new state Workforce Development Department), it is not yet clear which local partners would join a consortium and which would choose to compete against each other.

These factors have helped to shape a local One-Stop initiative that is attempting to provide improved labor exchange services to employers and job seekers alike by looking for overlapping functions across the participating workforce development partners. As described below, the common functions selected for initial consolidation efforts include: customer reception, testing/assessment, employer services, and job placement. Although integration of services is driven strongly by a desire to achieve economies of scale in the face of reduced funding levels, improved customer service is also a clear local objective, as expressed by the Center's vision statement:

“The Workforce Development Center's mission is to assist individuals in meeting their economic and social needs.”

This vision does not yet encompass the forging of a single Center identity or the development of detailed goals and objectives for the Workforce Development Center as a whole. However, some partners recognize that the vision may ultimately evolve into “total functional integration” and an integrated workforce development business identity.

#### **ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE**

Recent state legislation creating an integrated state Workforce Development Department(WDD) and Workforce Development Board (WDB) also calls for the creation of *Regional Advisory Boards* to (1) advise the state WDD and WDB about regional workforce development needs, (2) assist in decisions about the state award of grants or contracts for the delivery of regional workforce development services, and (3) monitor the performance of local service providers. Regional Advisory Board members will be appointed by the governor based on recommendations submitted by local elected officials. Regional boards will include business and labor representatives, as well as a county elected official, municipal elected official, and a community college representative.

The role planned for Regional Advisory Boards is consistent with the state's plan to become a “broker” rather than a direct provider of local workforce development services in the future. Under the competitive model laid out in the legislation and promoted by the new WDD director, existing public workforce development agencies such as local Wagner-Peyser and JTPA administrative entities will be able to compete for service contracts with other non-governmental entities. Local partners could

compete against each other or form a consortium to apply for designation as the local workforce development service provider.

At the level of day-to-day program planning and administration, the partners in the Des Moines WDC have responded to the state's encouragement of an *inclusive* process for local One-Stop planning and administration. A “*Partners' Group*,” including senior staff from all local agencies that operate one or more major public workforce development program, is responsible for joint administration of the Center. The Partners' Group currently meets every other week to address issues of common concern and plan for the integration of selected core services. All workforce development agencies participating in the Partner's Group are committed to an integrated local planning process. “Core partners” are moving rapidly beyond coordinated planning to the development of integrated service functions. Partners that are not yet ready to participate in integrated service functions (because of philosophical, practical, or legislative/regulatory barriers) are welcome to participate as “non-core partners” in common planning and coordination efforts.

There are eight core partners in the Des Moines Workforce Development Center, as follows:

- *Iowa Department of Employment Security (DES)* is about to become part of the new integrated Workforce Development Department. Programs operated by DES in the local Des Moines office include UI, Wagner-Peyser-funded activities (ES), and VETS services. DES is also a contractor for the state's PROMISE JOBS program for AFDC recipients (which it operates jointly with the local JTPA Title II administrative entity).
- *The Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium (CIETC)* is the local administrative entity for the delivery of services under JTPA Title II. This agency is currently a local contractor of the State Department of Economic Development but will soon become a contractor of the new integrated Workforce Development Department when it takes over state-level administration of JTPA services. CIETC is also a partner with DES in the operation of the PROMISE JOBS program for AFDC recipients. All CIETC staff are housed at the WDC.
- *United Way* operates the local Dislocated Worker Center, as the designated JTPA Title III administrative entity. United Way also shares responsibility for the delivery of reemployment services to UI profilees in combination with DES. The Dislocated Worker Center is not co-located at the WDC because its staff needs room to grow and shrink (through accessing discretionary grants) as the need for dislocated

worker services changes, but one staff responsible for reemployment services to UI profilees is outstationed at the WDC.

- *The Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC)* covers 11 counties and has multiple campuses within the Des Moines metropolitan area as well as in outlying counties. At the One-Stop Center, DMACC leases classroom space for two ABE/GED classes. At the main DMACC campus, the college houses an *Economic Development Group* that provides employee retraining services to expanding and relocating businesses.
- *Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR)*. Although DVR has a staff person outstationed at the Center part-time and is represented on the Partners' Group, DVR has been prevented by legislative/regulatory barriers from participating in plans for consolidated staffing of core services.
- *Green Thumb* is a private non-profit agency that operates Iowa's federally-funded Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V, Older Americans Act). Agency staff are housed at the Center.
- *Goodwill Industries* is a private non-profit agency that serves individuals with serious barriers to employment using funding from the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the state Department of Human Services. Services administered by staff located at the Center include work experience and job coaching.
- *Dynamic Educational Systems, Inc. (DESI)* is a private non-profit agency that operates several Job Corps Centers in Iowa. Administrative staff for this program are housed at the Center.

Each of the partners listed above has at least some staff housed at the Center and participates in the Partners' Group. Each of the core partners, with the exception of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, is participating in plans for the consolidation of one or more service functions.

Additional "non-core" partners with an on-site presence at the Center include:

- *Area Agency on Aging*. An older worker specialist with the state-funded Retired Iowan Community Employment Program (RICEP) is housed within the DES offices at the Center, but does not have separate representation on the Partners' Group.
- *Lyric Vocational Counseling Services*. This private for-profit agency receives referrals to serve DVR and Veterans' Administration rehabilitation clients. Although this business rents space at the Center, it is not a voting member of the Partners' Group.

- *The Volunteer Mentoring Program.* This statewide program is represented in the Center by a half-time Vista volunteer. The program matches PROMISE JOBS clients in need of support to volunteer mentors.

Affiliated agencies that coordinate activities with WDC partners but are not currently considered partners in the WDC include:

- *The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS).* This agency is active in One-Stop planning at the state level, but is not an active participant in the operation of the Des Moines Workforce Development Center. Although DHS contracts with DES and CIETC for the operation of the PROMISE JOBS program, no income maintenance case workers are located at the Center.
- *Iowa Department for the Blind,* the sister agency to DVR, provides blindness adjustment services to individuals with new visual impairments. While interested in coordinated planning with WDC partners, this agency is not co-located or represented on the local Partners' Group.
- *Polk County Social Services* and the *YWCA* each operate Family Development and Self Sufficiency (FaDSS) programs that provide intensive case management services to individuals with serious barriers to self-sufficiency. Although clients are referred to FaDSS from the PROMISE JOBS program, FaDSS providers are not co-located at the Center.

In summary, the organization of the One-Stop initiative in the Des Moines Workforce Development Center is characterized by (1) co-location of a wide variety of public and non-governmental workforce development agencies and organizations, (2) commitment to a common inter-agency planning process guided by a joint administrative steering committee referred to as the Partners' Group, and (3) participation by a group of "core partners" in planning for the consolidation of a selected set of core services. Future state-level decisions about the selection and certification of local workforce development service providers may transform the local delivery framework, if a competitive RFP process is used.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

Current mechanisms for local communication and coordination to support One-Stop development include bi-weekly Partners' Group meetings in which agency administrators participate, as well as meetings of four planning committees composed of agency administrators and some line staff. The key inter-agency planning

committees include: Customer Service, Assessment, Employer Services, and Job Development. Each of these committees are developing proposals for the integration of selected services across the participating agencies for consideration by the full Partners' Group.

Several respondents indicated that planning and communication about system transformation has been limited to a relative small number of key individuals from each of the participating partners. A group of partners concerned with marketing the WDC (described below) indicated that one of the most pressing marketing issues is how to "sell" the One-Stop concept to line staff within the partner agencies, many of whom are fearful of how One-Stop implementation will affect their job security, working conditions, and wages and benefits. Participation by line staff in reconnaissance trips to One-Stop centers in Wisconsin appeared to be an effective way for staff representing a variety of perspectives within the WDC to be exposed to the One-Stop concept.

All partners emphasized the need for improved day-to-day communication among staff in different partner agencies, including electronic mail and the sharing of client-level and administrative databases. In the absence of such communication tools, efforts to forge inter-agency trust and the sense of a common enterprise are hampered. Although all partners say they are now much more aware of what other partner agencies do, most staff are still primarily involved with their own agency's programs, rather than having a detailed overview of the Center as a whole. Even the DES Executive Officer for the PROMISE JOBS program, who coordinated the site visit, indicated it was extremely valuable for her to sit in on the local site interviews for the evaluation because they gave her a new understanding of everything that happens within the Center.

#### **FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES**

The partners within the Des Moines WDC have approached the sharing of resources by making informal in-kind contributions of staff and equipment to operate shared functions, rather than by formally pooling funds. The cost of the shared facility is covered through sublease agreements between the co-located agencies and DES, which is the local leaseholder. Lease agreements cover the cost of the physical facility and operating costs (e.g. utilities, phones). For some agencies, the lease agreement also includes a fee to cover agency access to DES equipment, such as the copy machine.

To date, the only funds that have been formally earmarked for the WDC as a whole, rather than for one of its constituent programs or agencies, are the One-Stop Implementation Grant awards provided by the state for One-Stop system development. The Center received \$25,000 from the state's first-year One-Stop grant for remodeling costs to create the physical infrastructure for an integrated "customer reception desk" for the entry area of the WDC. A second-year grant of \$69,500 was received for the refurbishing of an integrated Assessment Center to be staffed and used by all core partner agencies. The Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium (CIETC) is the local fiscal agent for these funds, which are to be expended following plans developed and approved by the Partners' Group.

Additional in-kind contributions have been provided by the participating partners to support shared facilities. For example, DES has paid for the development and staffing of the Resource Center, which is available to customers from all agencies. DMACC has provided on-site ABE/GED classes using a combination of ABE and general college funds. For the staffing of the new Assessment Center, all partners are being asked to contribute staff to help operate the center. In exchange, all participating agencies will be able to refer their clients for a core set of tests at no additional per test charge. Partners that do not help staff the Assessment Center will be charged for use of all assessment services.

Thus, to date, the development of the WDC has been furthered through an informal bartering process, whereby each participating agency offers something of value in exchange for mutual benefits. For example, in the refurbishing of the Assessment Center, the community college provided the carpeting, DESI (the Job Corps administrator) arranged for the carpet installation, DES provided the glue for the carpet, while CIETC traded in some old furniture to get the modular wall dividers that separate the Assessment Center from the surrounding space. Although this process has facilitated the development of shared resources, it has not been used to forge a unified Center identity among participating partners. Rather, each partner has retained its separate identity as well as its separate funding streams.

Following a different paradigm, DES and DMACC are working together to develop and market enhanced assessment/testing and placement services to local employers. Revenues obtained from these new lines of business (described in more detail later) will be retained on behalf of the Center as a whole, rather than allocated to any particular partner agency.

## **DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE**

### **Evolution and General Description of Local Design**

When different workforce development agencies first co-located at 215 Keo Way in May 1994, the local design for a One-Stop center was described as a “career arcade” with co-located services for the ease of customers, but few expectations for consolidation of services across partner agencies. The PROMISE JOBS program was a precursor of inter-agency “partnering” between DES and CIETC, but even this co-administered program assigned each participating agency responsibility for a different aspect or phase of services to JOBS participants.

The catalyst for a new design for integrated service delivery was the preparation of the state’s One-Stop Implementation Grant application in the summer of 1994. As part of the planning process, state and local partners began to conduct an analysis of common functions or “lines of business” shared across workforce development partners. As a result of this planning exercise, the state identified eleven different core services: career planning, career preparation, occupational skills development, job placement services, community services information and referral, employer technical assistance and training, UI services, labor market information dissemination, worker transition assistance, access to support services, and access to targeted workforce development programs.

After reviewing the potential for inter-agency integration of different lines of business, partners in the Des Moines WDC identified five activities in which there was commonality or overlap across multiple agency partners: customer reception, testing/assessment, case management, job development, and employer services.<sup>1</sup> Each of these activities except case management was selected for efforts to plan for integration of services across agency partners. Because it seemed too ambitious for the initial planning effort, integration of the case management function was deferred to a later date. Initial plans targeted July 1, 1996 as the target date for the implementation of integrated services in the Des MoinesWDC.

### **Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals**

---

<sup>1</sup>These activities do not correspond exactly to the lines of business identified at the state level. Some services targeted for integration in the Des Moines WDC are narrower than the generic lines of business (e.g., testing/assessment is narrower than career planning); others, such as customer reception and case management are not considered lines of business according to the state framework.

### **Universal Access**

Although they support the concept of *Universal Access*, staff involved in the One-Stop planning process are concerned about how to simultaneously preserve services to their current customer base and reach out to new customers, given cutbacks in partner agency staffing levels. They would, however, like to change the image of the Center in the minds of both employers and individual customers so that they are perceived as offering “value-added” services and employer access to a range of workers from lower- to higher-skilled.

Despite the stated goal of making services more attractive to a wider range of customers, the partners have not yet developed a clear service delivery strategy to reach additional customers. The Des Moines WDC has been slow to embrace self-service options as the key to providing services to an increasing volume and range of workforce development customers. Although large numbers of customers use the ALEX automated system to review available job listings, Center staff must screen the appropriateness of each referral before releasing the name of the employer and information about how to apply for the job. Self-service and guided-service opportunities are available on-site through the written and automated information in the DES Resource Center, as well as through dial-in access to the state’s DES Data Center, an automated bulletin board that lists job openings and labor market information. However automated self-service options are not emphasized as the delivery mode for large numbers of workforce development customers in this Center. The Center estimates that approximately 150 customers use the Resource Center each week, compared to an estimated 400 to 450 customers who visit the Center for services every day.

Improving Center identification and visibility is also recognized as an important key to make Center services accessible to a broader customer base. Even if customers are aware of one of the partner’s services and want to find the Center, the building is not currently well marked. Staff say customers have sometimes complained “I ran out of gas driving around looking for you.” Other issues identified as relevant to improving accessibility are increased hours of operation, improved availability of parking, and improved ability to address the needs of non-English-speaking customers. The Center is currently open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All partners agree that longer hours would be desirable. Limited parking is also currently an issue limiting ease of access by Center customers. In addition, DES staff have identified a need to develop additional Spanish language materials and services. For example, they

indicated that it would be very beneficial to develop a Spanish language recording on the telephone call-in line used by UI recipients to report wages earned during the previous week.

### **Customer Choice**

The presence of a variety of partner agencies and programs on-site as well as in additional locations throughout the 8-county service delivery area provides WDC customers with some choices about where and how to access services. Upon arriving at the Des Moines WDC, customers are “guided” to appropriate services by Center staff. Initial reception staff at the customer service desk, case managers/counselors for individual categorical programs, and soon-to-be-integrated job placement staff are responsible for making sure that customers receive services appropriate to their needs. At the state level, Iowa is investing heavily in the improvement of automated, user-friendly menu-driven labor market information products and job listings/resume banks to support customer self-service options.

As described above, self-service delivery is not yet stressed as a way to increase customer choice at the local level. Nevertheless, the DES Resource Center offers a promising small-scale beginning in the provision of a variety of self-service resources, including access to computers and software applications for resume development, typing and 10-key data entry practice and testing/self-certification, as well as access to written, computer-based, and video-based information on careers and job search methods.

### **Integrated Services**

In response to the federal goal of *Integrated Services*, the core partners in the Des Moines WDC are currently working on plans to integrate the common functions of customer reception, testing/assessment, job placement, and employer services. The integration of these functions is viewed as a strategy to reduce duplication of effort across partners. Ideally, integration of these services will enable individual partner agencies to enhance the content of other customer services, through the realization of cost savings.

The Customer Service Committee has developed plans for the integration of the customer reception function through the creation of an integrated “customer services desk” staffed by workers from each of the participating partners. These staff will be cross-trained in UI screening, ES registration, services available from other partners,

and will be able to perform the first stage of intake and referral for all incoming customers, including completion of ES/UI registration. Registration for other programs will continue to be performed by the staff of the individual categorical programs.

The Assessment Committee, under the leadership of DMACC, has prepared detailed plans for an integrated Assessment Center. This Center will be operated by staff assigned from each of the partner agencies, who will be cross-trained to conduct a common set of tests, including assessments of aptitudes, interests, general basic skills, work-related basic skills, and personality traits. The plan is for each participating agency to refer customers for specific tests. The referring agency will continue to provide test interpretation and ongoing service planning and case management to each customer. As long as the referring agency contributes staff to the operation of the Assessment Center, tests will be performed free of charge.

The Job Development Committee, representing individuals responsible for job development/placement functions in the different partner agencies have been wrestling with how to define and plan for an integrated job development function. The current plan is to create an integrated Job Development Team that will serve integrated caseloads of WDC customers identified as job ready. The primary function of these placement specialists will be to enter and service job orders provided by employers and match job applicants to available job orders.

The Employer Services Committee (which recognizes that the employer services function substantially overlaps the job development function) has identified an “account representative” system as a desirable way to organize employer contacts, so each employer feels that it has continuity of staff contacts over time. The Committee has also worked to design a “second tier” of employer services that are “value added” services to assist employers with particular worker recruitment, screening, and training needs. As described in more detail under the Employer Services section, these include: (1) expanded outsourced human resource functions provided by employer specialists on a fee-for-service basis, (2) development of an expanded Employers’ Resource Center with information about hiring, training, and business consulting assistance and services; and (3) provision of assistance to firms interested in training groups of new or incumbent workers.

In addition to plans currently underway for sharing common functions, customers from all partner agencies are invited to use the Resource Center developed with Wagner-Peyser funds and staffed by DES.

### **Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based**

To further the federal goal of a *Performance-Driven Outcome-Based* system, the local area is following the state's lead in documenting One-Stop accomplishments, establishing performance measures, and tracking improvements over time. However, because the WDC is not yet perceived as a single business enterprise in Des Moines, the issue of how to measure its joint accomplishments is not yet a relevant issue for most local partners.

Barriers to system-level accountability include the absence of an integrated identity for the partner agencies, as well as the absence of an integrated information system that can support the collection and analysis of information on services to "system" customers. The state is currently investing substantial energy in developing a prototype integrated client-level management information system.

Local staff expressed support for the principles of ongoing customer feedback and continuous improvement. The Des Moines area recently participated in a national customer satisfaction survey of ES customers and staff implemented as part of the ES Revitalization initiative. However, respondents indicated that, since they were still developing the local One-Stop system, investing heavily in customer feedback at this time might be "putting the cart before the horse."

### **Physical Facilities**

The Des Moines Workforce Development Center is housed in a two-story office building in downtown Des Moines. The Department of Employment Security holds a ten-year lease to the building and rents space to the other local partners. When local workforce development agencies began to share this space in May 1994, they did not have plans to operate an integrated service center. Although the physical layout is not ideal for shared operations, local partners are making physical adaptations as they go along to support plans for consolidated functions.

An integrated customer service desk is key to the plan for integrated Center operations. Currently, customers seeking assistance with UI applications, ES registration, and/or assistance finding a job approach a unified ES/UI reception desk opposite the main entry on the first floor. On busy days, the line at the reception desk

extends out the door. Customers seeking services from PROMISE JOBS, JTPA, or the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program are referred to a separate reception desk on the second floor. Customers seeking services from another local partner agency are currently expected to go directly to the offices occupied by staff from that agency. As part of the integration of reception functions across agencies, the Center partners are planning to move the first-floor reception desk farther into the main reception room to accommodate the customer flow and cross-staff the reception function so that this desk will serve the initial reception and intake needs of all “first-time” Center customers.

Return customers are often able to go directly to the part of the building that is appropriate to their service needs. One of the physical design issues that Center staff are currently debating is whether to maintain the “open” nature of the entire building, or whether to maintain any “secure” areas where customers would need to be accompanied by staff. This is a particular problem in trying to plan for extended hours of operation of some functions on evenings or weekends.

Adjacent to the first-floor customer reception desk is a large room that doubles as the DES waiting room and job search room. Along one wall are comfortable chairs and couches. Along the opposite wall are tables and chairs in front of 9 computer terminals where individuals can look up information on available jobs within Iowa (via the ALEX database) and one terminal at which users can access information about jobs throughout the U.S. (via America’s Job Bank). One corner of this room is a “kid’s corner” with books and games for children and a large aquarium with tropical fish. ES/UI staff are housed in individual cubicles off the waiting room or down adjacent hallways.

Down the hallway from the reception desk is the Resource Center, a pleasant room with four computer work stations for use by all Center customers interested in using resume preparation software, taking self-administered typing or 10-key skills tests, or accessing automated information about careers. The Resource Center also has written materials on a variety of topics including career information, job search techniques, and training resources, as well as a multi-media center with video offerings on a variety of topics.

The remainder of the first floor includes offices for staff from other partner agencies, two spacious rooms remodeled by DMACC for use as ABE/GED

classrooms, and a large interior space (with no windows) designated as the new shared Assessment Center. Several conference rooms are also available on the first floor. Upstairs space includes offices for the staff associated with JTPA and PROMISE JOBS. Two upstairs classrooms are used for PROMISE JOBS orientations, job clubs, and weekly “job fairs.” Interviewing rooms are available for use by employers who want to conduct on-site interviews with prospective employees.

Among the challenges faced by Center partners with respect to the current facility are a limited amount of free parking for use by customers and some difficulties with interior noise control, due to the use of modular partitions to separate the new Assessment Center operations from existing staff offices. Despite these challenges, most partners appear to be enthusiastic about the benefits of co-location and the potential for integrated functions. Nevertheless, at present, the Center is more accurately described as a facility within which partners operate closely coordinated services, rather than as a fully integrated service center.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

### **Staffing Arrangements**

Prior to the One-Stop initiative, major staff divisions within the WDC were between the JTPA and PROMISE JOBS program staff (located “upstairs”) and the ES and UI program staff (located “downstairs.”) The ES and UI functions have historically been highly integrated functions within the Department of Employment Security. Within PROMISE JOBS, staff from the local JTPA administrative entity and ES staff meet in joint weekly staff meetings as part of their joint responsibility for JOBS program operation, but the operational responsibilities of each agency are distinct. To date, staffing of other co-located programs, such as the Senior Community Service Employment Program, DVR, and Goodwill’s services to homeless workers have been entirely separate from ES, UI, and JTPA.

As a result of the planning process for integrating Center services, plans are being developed for cross-agency “teams” to perform the integrated functions of customer service desk/reception, assessment, job development/placement, and employer service representative. Through an inter-agency planning process, a standardized job description and consolidated staff training will be developed for each of the core functions. At present, the hiring process will not be integrated; rather, each core partner agency will contribute its equitable staffing share to the integrated team. (For example, the Job Development Team will have fifteen staff, five

contributed by ES, five contributed by the local JTPA/PROMISE JOBS contractor, and five contributed by other agency partners.) Integrated placement staff will be relocated within the facility so that members of the team are housed together.

Despite plans for integrated service delivery by the present local agency partners, the entire staffing plan for the delivery of local One-Stop services might be completely transformed if the state moves to a competitive RFP process for the selection of local service providers.

### **Capacity Building**

Cross-training of staff, which has begun in the case of specific integrated or shared resources, is proving to be an effective tool for giving WDC staff a detailed understanding of the resources available within the Center. Cross-training is also an essential part of building cross-agency work teams for shared functions. Two areas in which formal cross-training curricula have been developed are for staffing the Resource Center and the Assessment Center.

Local respondents were not familiar with the capacity building efforts currently being planned by the state One-Stop team. As discussed in the state profile, topics for which training is being developed at the state level include supports for organizational and cultural change and training to support the use of new technology-based products. In discussions with local respondents at the Des Moines WDC, staff evidenced a strong interest in team-building training. There would probably also be strong local support for technology training related to system-level accountability and communication functions (e.g., such as sending electronic mail across partners and exchanging or merging client-level information across programs). However, some local staff were not very enthusiastic about expanded technology-based labor market information products, because they did not think that individual customers would be interested in these products.

### **Management Information Systems (MIS)**

Local staff are aware of Iowa's participation in multi-state initiatives to develop integrated intake and case management systems across different workforce development programs. Although a few local respondents are participating in state-level MIS planning teams, One-Stop MIS development is perceived as a state-level function.

At the local level, the need for improved information exchange and communications systems among local partners is evident. At the present time, although

there are information-sharing agreements in place between some partners and programs (e.g., between PROMISE JOBS and DHS for information on the income maintenance status of AFDC clients), not all local staff have access to case management information and job listings maintained by other agencies. Staff working for the local JTPA administrative entity do not yet have computers available at their individual work stations. Clearly standardization of MIS hardware and software remains a major implementation challenge for both the state and, ultimately, the local levels. However, at the present time, questions about what organizational structure will be used for the delivery of local workforce development services appears to take precedence over questions about the design and implementation of MIS support systems.

### **Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements**

Customers of the Des Moines WDC appear to be comfortable using the automated ALEX and America's Job Bank systems from terminals located within the Center to locate information about available jobs. In addition, interested customers are informed about the state's electronic bulletin board called the "DES Data Center," which individuals and businesses may access from remote personal computers via modem for information about job listings and local labor markets. Since job listings available from in-house ALEX terminals and the DES Data Center use suppressed job orders, customers must still contact an ES Job Placement Specialist for information about the identity of the employer for a specific job listing.

At the state level, Iowa is investing in the creation of new automated user-friendly databases with information on careers, labor markets, and training opportunities. However, local respondents were not particularly interested in these new products as resources for employers or individual job-seeking customers. One respondent noted that, "Local job seekers with good educational skills already know who the good local employers are and where the good jobs are. Local job seekers with poor educational preparation or more limited job histories don't care about career paths—they just want a job." This highlights a serious implementation challenge for Iowa—how to create a demand among both local workforce development staff and individual employer and job-seeker customers for new and more sophisticated LMI products.

### **Marketing**

The local Partners' Group has identified areas of common marketing interests among Center partners, as well as the need for each participating agency to continue marketing its specific or unique products or programs to its own customers. Marketing the Center to internal customers (e.g., staff of different partner agencies) was also identified as a major priority for the coming months, since there is significant resistance to an integrated Center among line staff of some partner entities. Although partners believe it is somewhat early to develop a fully articulated marketing plan, shared marketing activities will target: (1) the general public; (2) the schools; and (3) employers.

The goal of marketing the Center to the general public is to improve overall visibility of the WDC as a place where employers and workers of all skill levels can get their needs met. Immediate marketing needs include improved name recognition and public awareness of the Center location. The need for an exterior sign identifying the Center is recognized by all local partners as a priority.<sup>2</sup> In addition, marketing through the schools is being pursued as a strategy to increase awareness of Center operations by young people about to enter the labor market, by arranging for a "Workforce for Teens" career awareness course to be offered at the Center for local high school credit. Marketing the Center to local employers includes two distinct efforts: providing information about the core services available free of charge, and marketing enhanced assistance with recruiting, screening, and training employees on a fee-for-service basis. One strategy being considered for marketing services to employers is to establish an "account representative" system, with one member of the inter-agency Job Development Team assigned to each employer account.

## **DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS**

### **Services for Individual Customers**

"Core" services currently available to all customers at the Des Moines Workforce Development Center include:

- *Access to job listings and job matching services* through ALEX and America's Job Bank using on-site terminals as well as remote access to the state's DES Data Center.

---

<sup>2</sup>After investing substantial cross-agency effort in developing the design for signage, the state requested that the project be put on hold until after the development of a logo for the merged state Workforce Development Department.

- *Application for and receipt of UI benefits.* Initial applications are processed by UI staff. Continuation requests (wage reports) may be filed over an automated telephone line.
- *Self-service access to labor market information,* through written and automated information in the Resource Center and the DES Data Center.
- *Testing/assessment.* All participating partner agencies may now refer individual customers to the Assessment Center for specified tests (from a menu that includes interests, aptitudes, general basic skills, work-related basic skills, and personality traits.)
- *Self-service career planning activities* within the Resource Center, including a CD-based program called *Choices* that describes different occupations, self-assessment software to practice and certify skills in typing and 10-key data entry, career planning videos, written career planning information for different occupations, and referral to information on starting a business.
- *Career preparation information for high school students* provided through an 8-week curriculum offered one hour each afternoon at the Center for high school students.
- *Self-service job search training* activities within the Resource Center, including videos, written and automated job search materials, and use of resume preparation software. Resource Center staff often assist customers with resume preparation by reviewing and critiquing completed resumes.
- *Written information on local employers and training providers* through brochures and assorted materials available within the Resource Center.
- *Access to on-site ABE/GED classes* offered 3 hours per day, 5 days per week by the local community college.
- *Referral to available community services*, including training resources and family support services by reception staff and through written materials in the Resource Center.

One of the design issues that the Partner's Group is considering is whether and how the Center might offer case management, assessment/testing, and staffed job search assistance to interested members of the general public or whether these services will be available only to participants eligible for categorical programs.

Services currently reserved for particular target groups eligible for funding from categorical programs include:

- *Individual service planning, counseling, and case management services* for participants in programs reserved for UI profilees, dislocated workers, older workers, PROMISE JOBS participants, and JTPA participants.
- *Group job search training/job clubs* for participants in PROMISE JOBS and the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program.
- *Placement in work experience and/or on-the-job training* through JTPA or the program administered by Goodwill Industries for individuals with disabilities.
- *Financial assistance and supportive services* for skills training or basic educational services for PROMISE JOBS, dislocated workers, and JTPA Title II participants. However, occupational training funds for PROMISE JOBS have been exhausted since 1994; participants are put on a waiting list.

In addition, categorical programs such as PROMISE JOBS coordinate with several community agencies offering more intensive family support services to participants who have serious employment barriers.

### **Services for Employer Customers**

In planning for integrated services to employers, the local Employer Services Committee has identified core “first tier” services as well as enhanced “second tier” services. First tier services include entering employer job openings into the automated job banks and making appropriate referrals. Partners plan to improve employer relations and increase the quality of first tier services by implementing an “account representative” system and conducting follow-up with employers after placement to review the appropriateness of the applicants referred.

The second tier of employer services, which is still under development, will consist of “value-added” services to employers to assist them with particular challenges in the hiring process. For instance, as a result of corporate downsizing, companies’ human resources departments are very short-staffed. As a result, employers have tended to be more receptive to ideas about how public agencies could assist them in the hiring process. Partners believe that employers will be willing to pay for such assistance. Therefore the Employer Services Committee has identified several different value-added services for development:

- *An Employers’ Resource Center.* This service would offer employers information about all aspects of the hiring process, including information about hiring laws and rules, information about “best

practices” in recruiting, screening, and hiring new employers, and referral to technical assistance and training resources.

- *Enhanced staff support for recruiting and screening new job applicants*  
This staffing service is being piloted on a fee-for-service basis with one firm that is opening a new facility in Des Moines.
- *Participation in the Work Keys<sup>3</sup> system*, which “profiles” the foundation skills required to do a particular job and assesses job applicants against the required skills. Employers participating in this system pay a fee to have staff “profile” a job and assess applicants’ skills in up to 8 skill areas. So far four large local employers have purchased this service from the WDC.
- *Assistance with workforce training* for employers planning to expand or relocate in Iowa, through a state-funded “New Jobs” incentive program administered by the Economic Development Group at the Des Moines Area Community College. Another “value-added” service to assist employers with workforce training is a “train the trainers” program operated by the community college with participation by the local Chamber of Commerce to teach work supervisors to be effective trainers.

## **CUSTOMER RESPONSE**

### **Individuals**

Because many of the planned changes to the delivery of workforce development services have yet to be made, customers still consider themselves the clients of a particular agency and program, rather than of an integrated workforce development system. As part of the One-Stop evaluation site visit, informal discussions were held with customers of ES job placement services, UI profiling reemployment services, customers using the Resource Center, participants in the PROMISE JOBS program, and students in the ABE/GED class.

All customers sounded appreciative of the services they were receiving. Across the board, customers indicated that they were treated with respect and that staff were helpful. However, customers’ expectations about the quality or sophistication of the services they received did not seem to be very high. For example, customers did not generally expect to receive individualized attention or support through the job search process.

---

<sup>3</sup>Work Keys is a proprietary system developed by American College Testing (ACT) in Iowa City and licensed to organizations that are trained by ACT in its use.

Where the customer response was particularly enthusiastic, it was due in large part to staff who were both caring and skilled in their personal interactions with customers. The services provided by the Resource Center manager were perceived to be of notably high quality. Customers responded positively to the cheerful, courteous, and helpful demeanor of this individual. Her first comment to customers who may be fearful of using the computer-based materials is “Go ahead! You can’t break it.” Drawing on her past experiences as a teacher, this staff member empowers Center users to help themselves. Customers were also particularly enthusiastic about the ABE/GED classes, in which teachers work with students to further their individual learning goals but also encourage class members to develop strong and supportive personal relationships with each other.

### **Employers**

Employers who participated in a focus group discussion during the evaluation site visit expressed strong interest in having the Center help them overcome the difficult challenges of finding qualified workers in the tight local labor market. Employer respondents expressed frustration at their inability to locate drug-free workers who would stay more than six weeks before leaving their new jobs. This was identified as a difficult challenge due both to the low local unemployment rate (“It’s a job seeker’s market”) and a perceived bias in the educational system that discourages students from seeking employment in the manufacturing sector. Employers at this meeting expressed strong interest in having a designated “account representative” that they could call with job orders, in the hopes that this might increase the proportion of appropriate job applicants referred.

Although they were not represented at the employer meeting, employers participating in the second tier of employer services are reported to be pleased with the more intensive services they are receiving on a fee-for-service basis from DES or through funding streams administered by the Economic Development Group at the community college.

### **INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN**

The federal One-Stop Implementation Grant was a clear catalyst in getting state and local One-Stop planners to move from an approach involving *co-location* and *coordination* to *integration of services*. State goals established as part of the One-Stop planning process included a “fast track” schedule for the creation of a One-Stop center

in each SDA by the end of 1996, despite the fact that not all SDAs appear to have fully bought into an integrated services approach.

The state has been highly influential in its clear policy support for the development of integrated local One-Stop centers, but has not prescribed what local One-stop centers should look like, preferring to encourage local partners to develop one-stop systems that are responsive to their particular local needs and priorities. Instead, the state has devoted much of its staff time and energy to the development of an integrated MIS and accountability system as well as the technological infrastructure to support self-service products. Key one-stop players at the state level are looking for local One-Stop partnerships to provide guidance about how actual service design and delivery should be transformed as a result of the new emphasis on customer-responsive services.

At the local level, concerns among current workforce development agency staff about their organizational future and individual job security are impeding planning for the transformation of workforce development services. Until the “dust settles” around the issues of selecting local service providers, it will be difficult for the participating partners to concentrate on improving customer services.

## **ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The Des Moines Workforce Development Center has made extremely rapid progress from a model of co-location and coordinated referral among workforce development partners toward a model of integration of selected services. The strengths of the local One-Stop system include good communication and coordination among the key staff of participating partner agencies, a greatly improved understanding of what each local partner contributes to the system, and an emerging planning framework that considers how shared and integrated services can be used to address customer needs. A clear understanding of how to enrich employer services, in particular, appear to be emerging from the local partnership.

To further develop the One-Stop vision, local actors might do well to pay more attention to the services that would be valued by more highly educated and skilled job seekers. Rather than envisioning how workforce development services might be enriched and revitalized for individual job seeker customers, Center staff appear to be emphasizing the staff-intensive delivery of job development services characteristic of ES services in the recent past (e.g. managing job orders for local employers), rather

than considering how group-based or self-service modes of service could be used to expand the availability and richness of career planning and job search assistance provided to an expanded customer base.